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Information Bulletin

*Grade 9 English Language Arts
1997-98*

This document was written primarily for:

Students	✓
Teachers	✓ Grade 9 Teachers
Administrators	✓
Parents	
General Audience	
Others	✓ Superintendents

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This bulletin contains general information about the Achievement Testing Program and information specific to the Grade 9 English Language Arts Achievement Test. **It replaces all previous bulletins.**

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September 1997

Contents

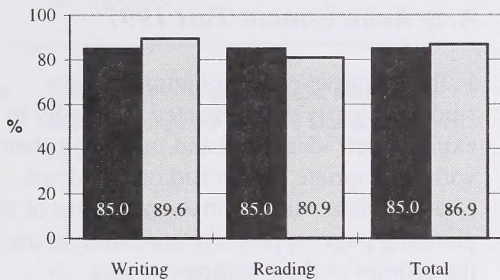
<i>Looking Back: Highlights of 1997</i>	1
Who Wrote the Test?	1
What Was the Test Like?	1
How Well Did Students Do?	2
Has Achievement Changed Since Last Year?	2
Commentary and Sample Questions from Grade 9 English Language Arts Achievement Test 1997	2
Reporting the Results	4
<i>Looking Ahead: What is Upcoming for 1998</i>	5
General Information	5
Administering the Tests	5
Schedule	6
Students in French Programs	7
Marking Achievement Tests Locally	7
<i>Standards: Curriculum, Assessment, Achievement</i>	7
Definitions	8
Confirming Standards	8
Purpose of Assessment Standards	8
Description of the Language Arts Assessment Standards	9
Acceptable Standard	9
Standard of Excellence	9
<i>Grade 9 English Language Arts Assessment</i>	10
General Description	10
<i>Part A: Writing</i>	10
Important Information to Note!	11
Blueprint for Part A: Section I—Narrative Writing	12
Blueprint for Part A: Section II—Functional Writing	13
Marking	14
Practice Writing Assignments	15
Practice Writing Assignment—Narrative/Essay Writing	16
Scoring Guide—Narrative/Essay Writing	18
Practice Writing Assignment—Functional Writing	23
Scoring Guide—Functional Writing	25

<i>Part B: Reading</i>	27
Development	27
Reading Blueprint	28
Practice Reading Questions.....	29
Key and Descriptors for Practice Reading Questions	39
 <i>Preparing Students for the Assessment</i>	40
Part A: Writing	40
Part B: Reading	41
 <i>Three Business Letter Formats</i>	42
 <i>Format of a Business Letter</i>	43
 <i>Addressing an Envelope</i>	44
 <i>Credits</i>	45
 <i>Alberta Education Contact</i>	45

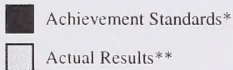
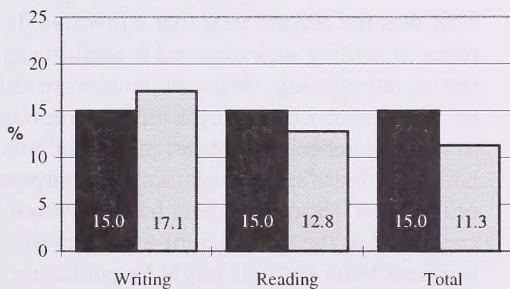
Looking Back: Highlights of 1997

This information provides teachers, school administrators, and the public with an overview of the results for the June 1997 Grade 9 English Language Arts Achievement Test. It complements the detailed school and jurisdiction reports.

Acceptable Standard



Standard of Excellence



*the percentage of students in the province expected to meet the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence

**the percentage of students in the province who met the standards (based on those who wrote)

Who Wrote the Test?

All students registered in Grade 9 were expected to write the 1997 English Language Arts Achievement Test. A total of 37 049 students completed the June 1997 assessment. This number reflects an increase of approximately 1 707 students over last years' administration of the test. In 1997, only a small proportion of students in Grade 9 did not write the test: 2.6% of students were absent, 3.7% of students were excused from writing by their superintendent, and an additional 2.5% of students wrote only one part of the test.

What Was the Test Like?

The test had two parts—*Part A: Writing* and *Part B: Reading*.

Section I of the *Part A: Writing* required students to read short literary selections and then write a narrative or essay in response to some aspect of the readings that was identified in the assignment.

This writing was scored in five reporting categories: Content, Organization, Sentence Structure, Vocabulary, and Conventions. Content and Organization were weighted to be worth twice as much as each of the other categories.

Section II of the *Part A: Writing* assignment required students to write a business letter.

This writing was scored in two reporting categories: Content and Content Management. These categories were weighted equally.

Part B: Reading consisted of 55 multiple-choice questions based on reading selections that were either informational or narrative/poetic in nature.

How Well Did Students Do?

As shown in the graphs on the previous page, on the Writing part of the test, 4.6% more students than expected met the *acceptable standard* and 2.1% more students than expected met the *standard of excellence*. On the Reading part of the test, 4.1% fewer students than expected met the *acceptable standard*, and 2.2% fewer students than expected met the *standard of excellence*. For the total test, 1.6% more students than expected met the *acceptable standard*, but 3.7% fewer than expected met the *standard of excellence*.

In 15.2% of the schools, the percentage of students meeting the *acceptable standard* for the total test was significantly above provincial expectations. In 69.7% of the schools, the percentage of students meeting the *acceptable standard* was not significantly different from provincial expectations. In 15.1% of schools, the percentage of students meeting the *acceptable standard* was significantly below provincial expectations. Schools where fewer than five students wrote the Grade 9 test are not included in these school calculations.

For detailed provincial results, refer to your school reports.

Has Achievement Changed Since Last Year?

For the total test, the percentage of students meeting the *acceptable standard* was slightly lower than last year (1.3%), while the percentage of students meeting the *standard of excellence* was the same. On the Writing part of the test, the percentage of students meeting the *acceptable standard* was slightly lower than last year (0.6%), while the percentage of students meeting the *standard of excellence* was 4.3% higher. On the Reading part of the test, the percentage

of students meeting the *acceptable standard* was slightly lower than last year (0.9%), and the percentage of students meeting the *standard of excellence* was 2.7% lower.

Commentary and Sample Questions from Grade 9 English Language Arts Achievement Test 1997

In the narrative/essay assignment, most students clearly demonstrated the ability to explain their ideas well and to support them with appropriate details and/or anecdotes. Many students did not make much use of the planning page, apparently preferring to use the prompt as their outline.

This was the second year that a functional piece of writing was required in addition to the narrative/essay. Most students were able to write letters employing a tone appropriate to their audience. However, many students had a some difficulty sustaining the purpose of the letter. Some teachers had expressed concern that the existence of a number of business letter formats might be confusing. In fact, most students were able to select a format and apply it consistently.

The following is a discussion of specific areas of strength and weakness for students in Part B: Reading of the Grade 9 test. Sample questions from the test are provided to highlight these areas for students meeting the *acceptable standard* and for those meeting the *standard of excellence* for reading. For each sample question, the keyed answer is marked with an asterisk. The passages on which these questions are based are on pages 29 to 37 of this bulletin. These questions are no longer secured and will not be reused in 1997.

Acceptable Standard

13. Several references were made to “Giza” in this article. “Giza” is an Egyptian

*A. city
B. pharaoh
C. pyramidologist
D. measure

15. In lines 19 to 21, the dramatist **most likely** wishes to draw the reader’s attention to Khlestakov’s

*A. arrogance
B. humbleness
C. state of hunger
D. willingness to pay

In **question 13**, students had to locate key details in the passage. Of the students who met the *acceptable standard* but not the *standard of excellence*, 78% were able to do this.

In **question 15**, students had to draw a conclusion about characters by synthesizing information in the passage. Only 45% of students who met the *acceptable standard* but not the *standard of excellence* answered this question correctly.

The strengths of students who met the *acceptable standard* but not the *standard of excellence* include the ability to

- understand the relationship among details in a reading selection
- identify directly stated details of setting and character
- infer the meaning of words and expressions from their context

However, many of these students did not do as well as expected in

- making judgements about character motivation by synthesizing information in a reading selection
- understanding the author’s writing style and organizational methods
- understanding poetic selections

Standard of Excellence

Students meeting the *standard of excellence* had little difficulty with the following questions, which were more difficult for students meeting the *acceptable standard* but not the *standard of excellence*.

In **question 17**, students had to draw a conclusion by synthesizing information in the passage. Of the students who met the *standard of excellence*, 76% answered the question correctly.

In **question 25**, students had to recognize the poet's use of contrasting ideas. Of the students meeting the *standard of excellence*, 93% answered this question correctly.

Students who met the *standard of excellence* had very few difficulties with this test.

These students could

- synthesize information from a selection to make inferences and judgements and to draw conclusions
- make judgements about the author's theme, purpose for writing, and tone
- understand the author's point of view
- understand the poetic selections

17. In lines 23 to 34, Khlestakov is ridiculing the

- *A. rural nobles
- B. footman
- C. urban merchants
- D. servant

25. Which of the following lines **best** shows a contrast of ideas?

- A. "Ring out a brutal rhythm from black ice" (line 2)
- *B. "A gawky skater with a godlike heel" (line 3)
- C. "He springs into a faster pace, and then" (line 9)
- D. "Far down the pastures, paper-white and pure" (line 10)

Reporting the Results

On August 22, 1997, each school jurisdiction received, electronically, a district report and individual school reports regarding their students' achievement, as well as guidelines for interpreting these results in relation to provincial standards.

To facilitate reflection on school programs, we expect that results will be shared with all school staff (not just teachers of grades 3, 6, and 9), as well as with parents and the community.

Two copies of an individual profile for each student will be sent to the school that the student will attend in September. We expect that the Parent Copy will be given to parents and the School Copy will remain with the student's record.

The following Achievement tests are secured:
Grade 6 Mathematics, 1995
ALL tests from 1996 and 1997

Looking Ahead: What is Upcoming for 1998

General Information

Purpose

The purpose of the Achievement Testing Program is to

- determine if students are learning what they are expected to learn
- report to Albertans how well students have achieved provincial standards at given points in their schooling
- assist schools, jurisdictions, and the province in monitoring and improving student learning

Enhance Student Learning

Careful examination and interpretation of the results can help identify areas of relative strength and weakness in student achievement. Teachers and administrators can use this information in planning and delivering relevant and effective instruction in relation to broad, general learnings in the *Program of Studies*.

Enable Accountability

Alberta Education and school jurisdiction personnel are responsible for ensuring that the highest quality education is provided to all students in the province.

Information about achievement is provided to

- schools and jurisdictions
- parents
- the public

so that they may know how well students in their schools are meeting local targets and provincial expectations.

Interpreting Results

Achievement tests assess only part of what is to be learned. In addition, many factors contribute to student achievement. Personnel at the jurisdiction and school levels are in the best position to appropriately interpret, use, and communicate jurisdiction and school results in the local context.

The Achievement Testing Program provides teachers, parents, students, school administrators, Alberta Education, and the public with information about what students know and can do in relation to provincial standards. Group results are reported at school, district, and provincial levels to improve learning opportunities for students.

The assessments are administered in two subject areas at Grade 3—language arts and mathematics—and in four subject areas at grades 6 and 9—language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science.

The assessments are based on provincial standards, which reflect important learnings in the subject areas listed above. Classroom teachers from across the province are extensively involved in developing and field testing the assessment instruments.

Administering the Tests

Information about the nature of the provincial assessments as well as their administration to special needs students can be found in the *General Information Bulletin, Achievement Testing Program*, which is mailed each fall to all superintendents and principals.

Schedule

The schedule for administering achievement tests in the 1997–98 school year is mandated.

January 1998

The January achievement tests for Grade 9 schools on a semester system must be administered according to the following schedule:

Wednesday, January 21	Grade 9 English Language Arts Part A
Thursday, January 22	Grade 9 Science
Friday, January 23	Grade 9 Français/French Language Arts Partie A
Monday, January 26	Grade 9 English Language Arts Part B
Tuesday, January 27	Grade 9 Mathematics
Wednesday, January 28	Grade 9 Social Studies
Thursday, January 29	Grade 9 Français/French Language Arts Partie B

May 1998

The written component of the language arts achievement tests for grades 3, 6, and 9 must be administered according to the following schedule:

Tuesday, May 26	Grade 3 English Language Arts Part A Grades 6 and 9 English Language Arts Part A
Thursday, May 28	Grades 6 and 9 Français/French Language Arts Partie A

June 1998

The machine-scorable component of achievement tests for Grades 3, 6, and 9 must be administered according to the following schedule:

Monday, June 15	Grade 3 English Language Arts Part B Grade 6 English Language Arts Part B
Wednesday, June 17	Grade 3 Mathematics Grade 6 Mathematics
Thursday, June 18	Grade 6 Social Studies Grade 9 Français/French Language Arts Partie B
Friday, June 19	Grade 9 Science
Monday, June 22	Grade 6 Science Grade 9 English Language Arts Part B
Tuesday, June 23	Grade 6 Français/French Language Arts Partie B Grade 9 Mathematics
Wednesday, June 24	Grade 9 Social Studies

The tests that will be administered each year are:

Grade 3

English Language Arts (*Part A: Writing*
and *Part B: Reading*)
Mathematics (English and French forms)

Grade 6

English Language Arts (*Part A: Writing*
and *Part B: Reading*)
Français/French Language Arts (*Partie A:*
Production écrite and *Partie B: Lecture*)
Mathematics (English and French forms)
Science (English and French forms)
Social Studies (English and French forms)

Grade 9

English Language Arts (*Part A: Writing*
and *Part B: Reading*)
Français/French Language Arts (*Partie A:*
Production écrite and *Partie B: Lecture*)
Mathematics (English and French forms)
Science (English and French forms)
Social Studies (English and French forms)

Students in French Programs

All students in French programs must write English Language Arts, French Language Arts, and French versions of other achievement tests if their language of instruction is French. Alberta Education will send a checklist to schools in January requesting an indication of how many English or French tests are required. These forms must be returned through jurisdiction offices by mid-February.

The 1998 mathematics achievement test for francophone and French immersion students will be based on the 1994 Interim program. It is therefore imperative that both the French translation and the English form of the 1997 mathematics achievement test for Grade 6 be secured. No practice items will

be released in the Grade 6 Mathematics Bulletin, 1997–98, and no items from the 1997 achievement test may be used by teachers with their students, during the 1997–98 school year. Copies of the 1997 test kept for interpreting results should be secured by the principal and used for this purpose only.

Marking Achievement Tests Locally

Teachers are able to mark the tests before returning them to Alberta Education. Teachers can use the results as part of an individual student's year end assessment, as well as for planning instruction.

Standards: Curriculum, Assessment, Achievement

The move toward results-based curricula has re-emphasized the need for a clear delineation of standards and their purpose. All standards and all methods of setting standards require judgement.

The process of setting a standard can only be as good as the judgements that go into it. The standard will depend on whose judgements are involved in the process. In this sense, all standards are subjective. Yet once a standard has been set, the decisions based on it can be made objectively. Instead of a separate set of judgements for each test-taker, you will have the same set of judgements applied to all test-takers. Standards cannot be objectively determined, but they can be objectively applied.¹

¹ Passing Scores; Samuel A. Livingston, Michael J. Zieky; Educational Testing Service, 1982.

Definitions

The Achievement Testing Program is directly concerned with three different but related standards. These provincial standards are curriculum standards, assessment standards, and achievement standards. Local targets are also discussed in this section.

- **Curriculum Standards** are the expected student learnings sequenced into grade levels. They include broad statements of knowledge, skills, and attitude expectations against which student performance is judged. These standards are established in the process of curriculum development and are found in the *Program of Studies* document produced for each subject.
- **Assessment Standards** are the criteria adopted for judging actual student achievement relative to curriculum standards. They are ultimately expressed and applied to test scores. They are derived from answers to questions such as: What scores must a student obtain or how many questions on a given test must a student answer correctly in order for his/her performance on the test to be judged as acceptable or excellent?
- **Achievement Standards** are judgements that specify what percentages of students are expected to achieve an acceptable and an excellent level of achievement in relation to each course of studies; i.e., to the relevant curriculum standards. They reflect a community judgement about what is an appropriate expectation for students. It is important to point out that this judgement is not a prediction of the percentage of students who will actually achieve acceptable or excellent levels, but rather a specification of the percentage of students at a given grade or year in school who are *expected* to achieve the acceptable (85%) or excellent standard (15%). **The 85% of students expected to meet the**

acceptable standard includes those students who meet the ***standard of excellence***. These standards apply to school, jurisdiction, and provincial performance.

- **Local targets** are goals set in schools/districts to focus plans for helping students learn what is expected by the provincial government. These local targets reflect the specific needs of students, the views of teachers, school administration, and the local community, and the resources available to provide learning opportunities for students.

Confirming Standards

Confirming standards is a process whereby judgements about students' performance on the assessment are made in relation to provincial standards. For more information on the confirming standards process, refer to Appendix A of the *Achievement Testing Program Provincial Report, June 1993 Administration*. For information on the selection of teachers for participation in the confirming standards process, refer to the current *General Information Bulletin, Achievement Testing Program*.

Purpose of Assessment Standards

The provincial standards are the basis upon which we assess how well students have learned English Language Arts by the end of Grade 9. These standards reflect the essential learnings that all Alberta students are expected to achieve. Provincial standards are useful, therefore, for assessing Grade 9 students in all types of school programs—public, private, and home education. By comparing actual results with provincial standards, decisions can be made about whether achievement is, in fact, “good enough.”

Description of the Language Arts Assessment Standards

The following statements describe what is expected of Grade 9 students who are meeting the acceptable standard or the standard of excellence on independent work at the end of the Grade 9 Language Arts program. These statements represent the standards against which student achievement will be measured.

<i>Acceptable Standard</i>	<i>Standard of Excellence</i>
<p>Students meeting the acceptable standard are able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate sustained interest in reading, viewing, and listening to relatively short, uncomplicated stories, documentaries, and dramatic works • deal with uncomplicated, familiar details and ideas that are directly presented • expand in writing the narration of a personal experience and, depending on context, elaborate somewhat on their ideas and sustain a topic for several pages of writing using appropriate but conventional details • organize concrete, factual materials that contain simple ideas • understand more complex techniques of literary structure or organization such as cause and effect, foreshadowing, flashback, and comparison and contrast; on occasion, they can apply that knowledge to unfamiliar literature or apply these techniques in their own writing • analyze and synthesize ideas in a familiar context when the experience is close in time to their own experiences • be successful, unassisted, with conventional tasks, and with conscious effort and/or assistance, complete increasingly complex tasks • independently understand, organize, and articulate course-related ideas and concepts in a concrete, direct, personal, and relatively uncomplicated manner • read relatively simple short novels, non-fiction selections, and narrative poems, and then clearly articulate (orally and in writing) the main idea, sequence of events, key details, and features of character and form 	<p>Students meeting the standard of excellence are able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read confidently and widely (mystery, romance, adventure, speculative fiction, poetry) and search for information from text • deal with abstract and complex details and ideas, and readily take risks with unfamiliar materials • read, write, and reflect on print and non-print text from many perspectives • analyze and evaluate ideas received from a wide variety of sources and appreciate how analysis can deepen their appreciation of the work • express their analysis through a variety of modes (writing, oral presentation, drawing, dramatization) with pertinent, specific, and imaginative detail • coherently develop and organize more abstract, complex material • establish an appropriate focus for communication and select ideas and language to suit different purposes and audience • identify, without teacher assistance, areas in their own writing that need to be revised and/or elaborated • create final products that are essentially error-free • demonstrate interest, enthusiasm, and imagination when dealing with details and ideas that demand complex thought and understanding

Grade 9 English Language Arts Assessment

General Description

The Grade 9 English Language Arts Assessment is composed of two parts.

Part A: Writing consists of two writing assignments designed to be completed in two hours. Additional time of up to 30 minutes may be provided to allow students to finish. Included in the total period is time for discussion before the narrative writing, and for the planning, drafting, and revising of both the narrative and functional writing.

Part B: Reading (multiple choice) is designed to be completed in 75 minutes. Additional time of up to 30 minutes may be provided to allow students to finish.

Part B: Reading consists of 55 multiple-choice questions based on reading selections from fiction, non-fiction, drama, poetry, and visual media. It has two booklets—one containing reading passages and one containing the questions. Answers are to be recorded on a separate machine-scorable answer sheet.

Students may use a print or electronic English Language or translation dictionary and a thesaurus when completing **only**

Part A: Writing.

Part A: Writing

Section I of the *Part A: Writing* assignment requires students to read short literary selections and then write a narrative or essay in response to some aspect of the readings that is identified in the assignment.

Section II of the *Part A: Writing* assignment is a functional piece of writing. This assignment requires the students to write for a specific audience and to fulfill a specified purpose within a given context. Specified purposes may include letters of invitation to guest speakers, requests for information, and congratulatory or thank-you letters. This part of the assignment tests students' writing skills by using "real world" situations. As in the narrative/essay assignment, the writers' ability to adjust content, order, tone, and diction to the situation is being tested.

The booklet for *Part A: Writing* Section I includes a page labelled Planning. Students are asked to produce only one copy of their work. They are encouraged to make revisions and corrections directly on this copy. Because of the limited testing time, it is felt that students benefit most from spending the majority of their time in composing and revising their work, rather than perfecting a "good copy."

Section II includes a page labelled Planning followed by a blank envelope that is to be addressed properly, and two lined pages for a letter.

Important Information to Note!

At the beginning of the test, students will be given time to discuss both prompts with classmates in groups of two to four, or to think alone about them, and to plan their responses before beginning to write.

In the past, many students have written papers that were “off topic.” Please encourage your students to address the prompts. **Students who make no attempt to address the prompt for functional writing will be awarded an Insufficient.**

Students may do their writing using a word processor. For information about using word-processing technology to complete the written component of the achievement test, see the policy in the *General Information Bulletin, Achievement Testing Program, Grades 3, 6, and 9*.

The mark for writing is worth 50% of the total mark for Language Arts. Section I, the narrative/essay, is worth approximately $\frac{2}{3}$ of the total mark for writing, and Section II, the functional writing assignment, is worth approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ of the total writing mark.

Blueprint for Part A: Section I—Narrative Writing

The blueprint that follows outlines Part A: Section I of the Grade 9 English Language Arts Achievement Test. It delineates the categories under which summary data will be reported to schools and jurisdictions.

Reporting Category	Description of Writing Assignment	Standards
<p>*Content (selecting ideas and details to achieve a purpose)</p> <p>Students respond to a selection of literature and communicate that response appropriately to a specified audience.</p>	<p>The writing assignment is a response to short literary selections provided in the test booklet. Students may use ideas from previous experience and/or reading. Students are to respond in a narrative or essay.</p>	<p>Students' achievement in each reporting category will be described according to the following standard statements:</p>
<p>*Organization (organizing ideas and details into a coherent whole)</p> <p>Students organize the response effectively and coherently to produce a unified composition that achieves their purpose for writing.</p>		<p>Meets the standard of excellence</p> <p>Approaches the standard of excellence</p>
<p>Sentence Structure (structuring sentences effectively)</p> <p>Students use a variety of sentence types and structures to achieve clarity, interest, and emphasis.</p>		<p>Clearly meets the acceptable standard</p> <p>Does not clearly meet the acceptable standard</p>
<p>Vocabulary (selecting and using words and expressions correctly and effectively)</p> <p>Students use words and expressions appropriately and effectively to communicate to the specified audience and to achieve their purpose.</p>		<p>Clearly below the acceptable standard</p>
<p>Conventions (using the conventions of written language correctly and effectively)</p> <p>Students communicate clearly by adhering to appropriate spelling, punctuation, and grammar conventions.</p>		<p>INS insufficient</p>

*These categories are weighted to be worth twice as much as each of the others.

Blueprint for Part A: Section II—Functional Writing

The blueprint that follows outlines Part A: Section II of the Grade 9 English Language Arts Achievement Test. It delineates the categories under which summary data will be reported to schools and jurisdictions.

Reporting Category	Description of Writing Assignment	Standards
Content (thought and detail) Students consider the audience and establish a purpose, incorporating significant information using complete and appropriate details.	The functional writing assignment requires students to write to a specified audience in the context of a business letter. They are also expected to correctly address a blank envelope.	Students' achievement in each reporting category will be described according to the following standard statements:
Content Management (using the conventions of written language correctly and effectively) Students communicate clearly by adhering to appropriate sentence structure, usage, mechanics, and format.		Meets the standard of excellence Approaches the standard of excellence Clearly meets the acceptable standard Does not clearly meet the acceptable standard Clearly below the acceptable standard INS insufficient or off-topic

Content and Content Management are weighted equally.

Marking

Classroom teachers will be able to mark students' writing, using scoring guides like those in this bulletin, before returning materials to Alberta Education.

A total score for a student's writing may be calculated by following the procedure below:

Narrative Writing

1. Assign a score of 1 to 5 for each of *content, organization, sentence structure, vocabulary, and conventions.*
2. Weight *content* and *organization* to be worth twice as much as the other categories by multiplying their scores by 2.

Maximum score possible for Narrative Writing = 35

Functional Writing

1. Assign a score of 1 to 5 for each of *content* and *content management.*
2. Multiply this total score by 2.

Maximum score possible for Functional Writing = 20

Total Score

1. Add the narrative and functional scores.

Total score for *Part A: Writing*

Narrative Writing $\frac{\quad}{35}$ (63.6%) + Functional Writing $\frac{\quad}{20}$ (36.4%) = $\frac{\quad}{55}$ (100%)

Samples of students' writing that exemplify the scoring criteria will be provided with the test materials, to support local marking. Marks awarded locally can be submitted to Alberta Education and will be used as the first reading of a student's response. The papers will then be marked centrally by Alberta Education as the second reading. Both marks contribute to the student's final mark. In the case of a discrepancy between these two marks, papers will be adjudicated

by a third reading, which will determine the final mark that a paper is awarded.

Papers that are not marked locally by teachers will be marked centrally only once. A small percentage of these papers will be marked a second time for inter-rater reliability.

All papers will be marked centrally in Edmonton in July. The Student Evaluation Branch will contact superintendents in the spring for their recommendations of markers. The approximately 165 Grade 9 teachers selected will reflect proportional representation from the various regions of Alberta. To qualify for recommendation by a superintendent, a prospective marker must be currently teaching Grade 9 Language Arts, have taught it for at least two years, have a permanent Alberta teaching certificate, and be employed by a school jurisdiction at the time of marking. Markers will be contacted in May and the list of markers will be finalized no later than June 15. Group leaders will meet for one day before the marking session.

Each year, we have many more teachers nominated to mark than we have spots for marking. We must make sure that we have a balance of markers reflecting the student populations in various parts of the province. As well, we keep a balance of representation of males and females, and of experienced and inexperienced markers. Unfortunately not everyone whose name is submitted is selected.

The time allotted for marking is condensed, hence markers are often asked to mark on Saturday and Sunday. The marking floor is open from 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. and markers are expected to be available to mark during those hours.

Practice Writing Assignments

The sample assignments that follow are similar in format and content to the assignments that will appear on the 1998 Grade 9 English Language Arts *Part A: Writing* component. They appeared on the 1997 Achievement Test. They are no longer secured and may be used for practice with students. Adequate space for planning and writing will be provided in the writing booklet.

Grade 9 Achievement Test English Language Arts Part A: Writing

Description

- This test consists of **two** sections.
- Before you write, you will have 10 minutes in total for discussion about the prompts in Section I and Section II.
- **Section I** contains some material for you to read and then respond to in writing.
- We suggest that you take about 70 minutes to complete Section I.
- When you have finished Section I, go on to Section II.
- **Section II** describes a situation that you must respond to in letter format.
- We suggest that you take approximately 40 minutes to write the letter.

You have 2 hours to complete this test.
You may take up to an additional 1/2 hour to complete the test, if you need it.

Instructions

- Before beginning to write, you will have 10 minutes to talk with your classmates (in groups of two to four) about the writing assignments, or to think about them alone.
- Jot down your ideas and/or make a plan before you write. Do this on the **Planning** page.
- Write in pencil or blue or black ink on the lined pages provided.
- You are to do only **one copy** of your writing. Remember that you may neatly make changes and corrections directly on this writing.
- You may use the following references:
 - a print or electronic dictionary (English language and/or translation)
 - a thesaurus
- Your Narrative Writing in Section I will be evaluated on **what** you say and **how well** you say it (on **Content, Organization, Sentence Structure, Vocabulary, and Conventions**).
- Your Functional Writing in Section II will be evaluated on **what** you say and **how well** you say it (on **Content and Content Management**).

Practice Writing Assignment—Narrative/Essay Writing

The material below is given to stimulate your thoughts and prompt you to write on the topic of smoking. You do not have to include any of this material in your writing; however, you may do so if it is helpful and supports your position.

Facts and Figures

Advertising portrays smoking as an enjoyable activity that makes a person popular, relaxed, and attractive.

About 70% of adolescents who smoke continue to do so for the next 40 years.

Tobacco kills more Canadians than do car accidents, suicide, murder, AIDS, and drug use combined.

Youth report that their peers are most often the source of their first smoking experience and provide the pressure and support to continue.

Labels on Cigarette Packages

Cigarette smoking causes cancer

Second-hand smoke causes cancer

Cigarettes are addictive

Tobacco smoke can harm your children

Smoking can kill you

Toxic Constituents
(Average) "Tar" 11 mg, Nicotine 1.0 mg,
Carbon Monoxide 12 mg



Young Smokers Speak Out

"I admire people who don't smoke."

"I get ticked off if someone asks me to put out one of my cigarettes."

"I am old enough to make my own choices."

"I've tried to quit, but it's very hard since most of my friends smoke, too."

Assignment (suggested time—70 minutes)

Write a narrative about an experience you, a friend,
or a relative has had with smoking.

OR

Write an essay about the impact that smoking has had on you,
a friend, or a relative.

You may draw from:

- your personal experiences
- materials on page 16
- other materials you have read
- television programs you have seen
- class discussions you have had

When writing, **be sure to:**

- **consider** your audience
- **focus** on your purpose
- **organize** your thoughts appropriately in sentences and paragraphs
- **budget** your time
- **proofread** and correct your work directly on your writing

Content

Focus

When marking **CONTENT** appropriate for Grade 9 narrative writing, the marker should consider how effectively the writer

- establishes a purpose
- chooses ideas
- supports the response
- considers the reader

<p>Meets the Standard of Excellence</p> <p>5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer's purpose, whether stated or implied, is clearly established and sustained. • The ideas used by the writer are carefully chosen and perceptive. • Supporting details are precise and often creative. • The writing captivates and holds the reader's interest, and is creative and/or original.
<p>Approaches the Standard of Excellence</p> <p>4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer's purpose, whether stated or implied, is clearly established and generally sustained. • The ideas used by the writer are thoughtful. • Supporting details are relevant and specific. • The writing engages and holds the reader's interest.
<p>Clearly Meets the Acceptable Standard</p> <p>3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer's purpose, whether stated or implied, is established but may not be sustained. • The ideas chosen by the writer are appropriate but conventional. • Supporting details are relevant but general. • The writing generally holds the reader's interest.
<p>Does Not Clearly Meet the Acceptable Standard</p> <p>2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer's purpose, whether stated or implied, is vaguely established and may not be sustained. • The ideas chosen by the writer are superficial. • Supporting details are scant and/or vague and/or irrelevant. • The writing does not hold the reader's interest.
<p>Clearly Below the Acceptable Standard</p> <p>1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer's purpose may be unclear; if a purpose is stated or can be implied, it is not sustained. • The ideas chosen by the writer are inappropriate. • Supporting details are irrelevant, inappropriate, and/or lacking. • The writing is confusing and/or frustrating for the reader.
<p>INS INSUFFICIENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student has written so little that it is not possible to assess the content.

Note: *Content and Organization are weighted to be worth twice as much as the other categories.*

Organization

Focus

When marking **ORGANIZATION** appropriate for Grade 9 narrative writing, the marker should consider how effectively the writing demonstrates

- focus
- coherent order
- connections between events and/or details
- closure

Meets the Standard of Excellence <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">5</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction is purposeful and interesting, and it clearly establishes an appropriate focus that is sustained. • Events and/or details are arranged in paragraphs, in a purposeful and effective order, and coherence is maintained. • Transitions, either explicit or implicit, effectively connect events and/or details within sentences and between paragraphs. • Closure is evident and purposeful.
Approaches the Standard of Excellence <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">4</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction is purposeful and clearly establishes an appropriate focus that is generally maintained. • Events and/or details are arranged in paragraphs, in a purposeful order, and coherence is generally maintained. • Transitions, either explicit or implicit, appropriately connect events and/or details within sentences and between paragraphs. • Closure is appropriate and related to the focus.
Clearly Meets the Acceptable Standard <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">3</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction is functional and establishes a focus that may be inconsistently maintained. • Events and/or details are arranged in a discernible order, although coherence may falter occasionally. • Transitions tend to be mechanical and may be used inconsistently within sentences and/or between paragraphs. • Closure is related to the focus but may be mechanical and/or artificial.
Does Not Clearly Meet the Acceptable Standard <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">2</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction may lack purpose and/or may not be functional; any focus established by the writer may not be maintained. • The arrangement of events and/or details is not clearly discernible, and coherence falters frequently. • Transitions, within sentences and/or between paragraphs, are lacking or may be inappropriate. • Closure may be unrelated to the focus.
Clearly Below the Acceptable Standard <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">1</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction, if present, is not functional or is inappropriate; no focus is established. • The arrangement of events and/or details is haphazard and incoherent. • Transitions are not used within sentences or between paragraphs. • Closure is inappropriate or missing.
INS INSUFFICIENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing has been awarded an INS for Content.

Note: Content and Organization are weighted to be worth twice as much as the other categories.

Sentence Structure

Focus

When marking **SENTENCE STRUCTURE** appropriate for Grade 9 narrative writing, the marker should consider the

- writer's control of sentence structure
- effectiveness and variety of sentence type and length
- variety of sentence beginnings

Meets the Standard of Excellence 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence structure is effectively and consistently controlled. • Sentence type and length are consistently effective and varied. • Sentence beginnings are consistently varied.
Approaches the Standard of Excellence 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence structure is controlled. • Sentence type and length are usually effective and varied. • Sentence beginnings are often varied.
Clearly Meets the Acceptable Standard 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence structure is generally controlled, but may occasionally impede meaning. • Sentence type and length are sometimes effective and/or varied. • Some variety of sentence beginnings is evident.
Does Not Clearly Meet the Acceptable Standard 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence structure sometimes lacks control, and this can impede the meaning. • Sentence type and length are rarely effective and varied; run-on sentences and/or sentence fragments, if present, often impede meaning. • There is little variety of sentence beginnings.
Clearly Below the Acceptable Standard 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence structure generally lacks control, and this often impedes meaning. • There is no deliberate variation of sentence type or length; run-on sentences and/or sentence fragments, if present, severely impede meaning. • There is no variety of sentence beginnings.
INS INSUFFICIENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing has been awarded an INS for Content.

Vocabulary

Focus

When marking **VOCABULARY** appropriate for Grade 9 narrative writing, the marker should consider the

- accuracy of the words and expressions selected by the writer
- effectiveness of the words and expressions selected by the writer
- appropriateness and effectiveness of the writer's voice/tone

Meets the Standard of Excellence <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">5</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words and expressions are used accurately and deliberately to fulfill the writer's purpose. • Specific words and expressions are used to create vivid images and/or enrich details. • The writer's voice/tone is confident, appropriate, and enhances the meaning.
Approaches the Standard of Excellence <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">4</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words and expressions are often used accurately and effectively. • Specific words and expressions show some evidence of careful selection and some awareness of connotative effect. • The writer's voice/tone is clear and appropriate.
Clearly Meets the Acceptable Standard <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">3</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words and expressions are generally used appropriately. • General words and expressions are sometimes used when specific words would have been more effective. • The writer's voice/tone is discernible but may be inconsistent or uneven.
Does Not Clearly Meet the Acceptable Standard <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">2</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific words, if present, are frequently misused. • General, rather than specific, words predominate. • The writer's voice/tone is not clearly established or is inappropriate.
Clearly Below the Acceptable Standard <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">1</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General words that convey only vague meanings are used. • The writer's voice/tone is not evident.
INS INSUFFICIENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing has been awarded an INS for Content.

Conventions

Focus

When marking **CONVENTIONS** appropriate for Grade 9 narrative writing, the marker should consider the extent to which the writer has control of

- mechanics (spelling, punctuation, capitalization, indenting for new speakers, etc.) and usage (agreement of subject–verb, agreement of pronoun–antecedent, etc.)
- clarity and flow of the response

Proportion of error to length and complexity of response must be considered.

Meets the Standard of Excellence 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of the writing is enhanced because it is essentially error-free. • The relative absence of error is impressive considering the complexity of the response.
Approaches the Standard of Excellence 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of the writing is sustained because it contains only minor convention errors. • Any errors that are present do not reduce the clarity or interrupt the flow of the response.
Clearly Meets the Acceptable Standard 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of the writing is maintained through generally correct use of conventions. • Errors that are present may reduce the clarity or interrupt the flow of the response.
Does Not Clearly Meet the Acceptable Standard 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of the writing is weakened by the frequently incorrect use of conventions. • Many of these errors reduce the clarity and interrupt the flow of the response.
Clearly Below the Acceptable Standard 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of the writing is limited by the consistently incorrect use of conventions. • These errors severely reduce the clarity and interrupt the flow of the response.
INS INSUFFICIENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing has been awarded an INS for Content.

Practice Writing Assignment—Functional Writing (suggested time—40 minutes)

Read the information below; then complete the assignment that follows.

Imagine that for a health project you have been asked to research a career. As part of your research, you are to interview Gerry Rose, a person currently employed in that occupation. Contact Gerry Rose by letter, requesting an interview on Friday, June 20, 1997.

ASSIGNMENT

Write a business letter to Gerry Rose. Among other details, be sure to:

- provide sample questions for Gerry Rose's consideration
- sign your letter Chris Smith—**do not sign your own name**

and

Address the envelope outline provided on page 24, using the addresses below.

School Address

Mountain Valley High School is in Lawrence, Alberta. The street address is 937 Pine Street. The postal code is T6G 6W2.

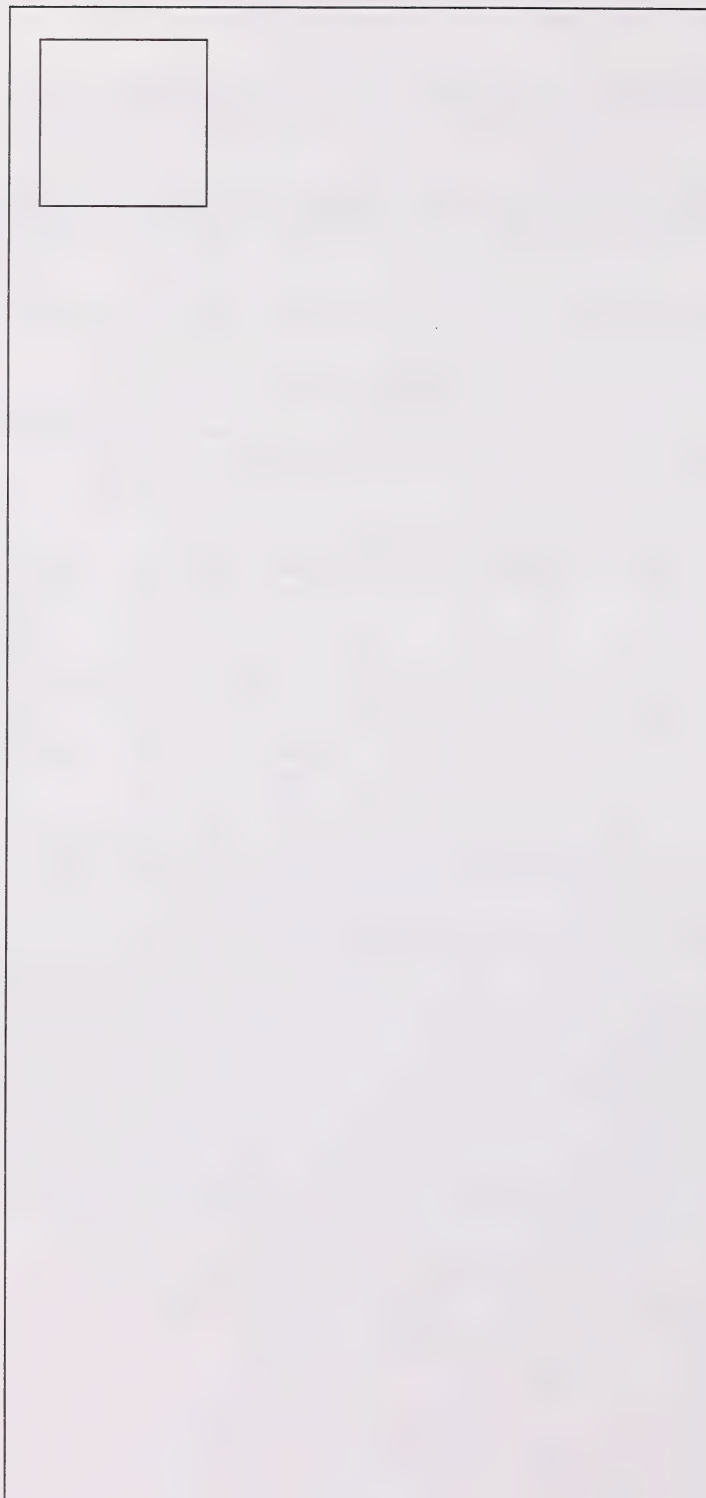
Gerry Rose's Address

Gerry Rose lives in Lawrence, Alberta. The street address is 8273 Main Avenue. The postal code T6G 8V9.

When writing, **be sure to**:

- **consider** your audience
- **focus** on your purpose
- **organize** your thoughts appropriately in sentences and paragraphs
- **budget** your time
- **proofread** and correct your work directly on your writing

Envelope



Content

Focus

When marking **CONTENT** appropriate for Grade 9 functional writing, the marker should consider

- effectiveness of development and organization of the topic
- how the purpose of the assignment is fulfilled with complete and appropriate information
- appropriateness of tone for a business letter and awareness of audience

Meets the Standard of Excellence 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development and organization of the topic is clearly focused and effective. • Complete information is presented, and this information is enhanced by precise and appropriate details that effectively fulfill the purpose. • A tone appropriate for the addressee is clearly and effectively maintained.
Approaches the Standard of Excellence 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development and organization of the topic is generally focused and effective. • Complete information is presented, and this information is substantiated by appropriate details that fulfill the purpose. • A tone appropriate for the addressee is clearly maintained.
Clearly Meets the Acceptable Standard 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development and organization of the topic is adequate. • Sufficient information is given, and this information is supported by enough detail to fulfill the purpose. • A tone appropriate for the addressee is generally maintained.
Does Not Clearly Meet the Acceptable Standard 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development and organization of the topic is vaguely focused and ineffective. • Information is lacking. Supporting details are scant, insignificant, and/or irrelevant. The purpose is only partially fulfilled. • A tone appropriate for the addressee is evident but not maintained.
Clearly Below the Acceptable Standard 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development and organization of the topic, if present, is inadequate. • Information is inappropriate and/or missing. The purpose is not fulfilled. • Little awareness of tone appropriate for the addressee is evident.
INS INSUFFICIENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The marker can discern no evidence of an attempt to fulfill the assignment, or the writing is so deficient in length that it is not possible to assess content.

Note: *Content and Content Management are equally weighted.*

Please advise students that their work must be related to the assignment. Those letters that are completely “off topic” will be awarded an Insufficient.

Content Management

Focus

When marking **CONTENT MANAGEMENT** appropriate for Grade 9 functional writing, the marker should consider

- accuracy and effectiveness of words and expressions
- control of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics (spelling, punctuation, etc.)
- consistent application of format for business letter and envelope

Proportion of error to length and complexity of response must be considered

Meets the Standard of Excellence <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">5</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words and expressions used are consistently accurate and effective. • The writing demonstrates confident and consistent control of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. • The letter and envelope are essentially free from format errors and/or omissions.
Approaches the Standard of Excellence <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">4</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words and expressions used are usually accurate and effective. • The writing demonstrates competent and generally consistent control of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. • The letter and envelope contain few format errors and/or omissions.
Clearly Meets the Acceptable Standard <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">3</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words and expressions used are generally accurate and occasionally effective. • The writing demonstrates basic control of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. Errors may occasionally impede meaning. • The letter and envelope contain occasional format errors and/or omissions.
Does Not Clearly Meet the Acceptable Standard <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">2</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words and expressions used are frequently inaccurate and/or misused. • The writing demonstrates faltering control of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. Errors impede meaning. • The letter and envelope contain frequent format errors and/or omissions.
Clearly Below the Acceptable Standard <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">1</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words and expressions are inaccurate and/or misused. • The writing demonstrates lack of control of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. Errors severely impede meaning. • The letter and envelope contain numerous and glaring format errors and/or omissions.
INS INSUFFICIENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing has been awarded an INS for Content.

Part B: Reading

Part B: Reading of the Grade 9 English Language Arts Achievement Test requires students to read selections that include a variety of informational and narrative/poetic texts with implicit ideas and details. The content of these selections is often abstract and may be unfamiliar or specialized. After reading these selections, students answer 55 multiple-choice questions based on the readings.

The practice questions on pages 29 to 38 appeared on the June 1997 Achievement Test (all other questions on this test are secured). These released questions, along with questions from previous bulletins, can be used to prepare students for the current achievement test.

These questions illustrate the nature and complexity of those that will appear on the 1998 test, although the emphasis may be slightly different. The blueprint showing the approximate number of questions in each category appears on the next page.

Development

Reading selections are chosen according to the following general guidelines:

- Reading selections, whenever possible, should be relatively short but should be complete works containing a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- Reading selections should reflect the interests of the majority of Grade 9 students.
- Reading selections should be of appropriate difficulty for Grade 9 students.
- Canadian content should be used extensively.

The following considerations guided question development:

- Questions relating to each reading selection should be arranged from specific to general, wherever practical.
- Questions should test students' ability to understand and analyze the reading selections and to make judgements about their form and content. Only questions dealing with significant aspects of the reading selections should be asked.

Reading Blueprint

The blueprint for *Part B: Reading* shows the reporting categories and language function under which questions are classified. The number of questions in each category is approximate.

Part B: Reading Grade 9 Language Arts Achievement Test

Reporting Category	Question Distribution by Language Function		Number of Questions	Percent of Test
	Informational	Narrative/Poetic		
Main Ideas/Details The student should be able to construct meaning by attending to and interpreting ideas/details related to format cues and character (actions, motives, and values), setting, events, and conflict.	7	8	15	27
Organization of Ideas and Relationships between Form and Content The student should be able to demonstrate an understanding of literary forms and of the relationship between the author's intention and point of view and choice of form and writing style, and the author's choice of organizational methods such as chronological order, cause/effect, comparison/contrast, foreshadowing, and flashback.	3	9	12	22
Associating Meaning The student should be able to associate meanings of words and expressions from prior knowledge and contextual clues, understand the denotations and connotations of words and expressions, and determine the meaning and effect of figurative language.	4	8	12	22
Synthesizing Ideas The student should be able to draw conclusions, make generalizations, and/or predict plausible outcomes by synthesizing information from an entire reading selection.	6	10	16	29
Total Number of Questions	20	35	55	100
Percent of Test	36	64	100	100

Practice Reading Questions

- I. Read the article “The Pyramids,” and then answer questions 1 to 5.

THE PYRAMIDS

The etymology of the word *pyramid* is twofold. To the Greeks it meant a light or fire. To the Egyptians, *pyramid* referred to a divine place. Recent studies indicate that perhaps both of these origins have roots in history and give insight to the lives and philosophies of the pyramids’ architects. . . .

- 5 Scientists tell us that the Great Pyramid at Giza, believed to be 5 000 years old, is the largest found in Egypt. Its height is approximately equivalent to a forty-five-story building. The 2.5 million blocks within its structure, weighing from two and a half to twelve tons each, cover almost seventeen acres.

- 10 Engineers and scientists marvel at the size of the Great Pyramid and the enormous feat involved in its building. Philosophers and mathematicians check and recheck calculations that are often confusing, often astounding. They continuously revise their theories in an effort to understand fully the significance of the Giza pyramid and other, smaller pyramids.

- 15 Some claim extremely careful planning went into the building of the Great Pyramid. Others cite an abundance of coincidences in their attempts to explain the—as yet—inexplicable.

- For example, a measurement has been found known as the “pyramid inch.” It is said to equal one-tenth of a millionth of the earth’s meridian. Also, the sum of the Pyramid’s base sides equals 36 524 pyramid inches, or one hundred times the
20 number of pyramid inches that there are days in a year. Pyramidologists also point out that the height of the Great Pyramid times 10 million gives the distance from the earth to the sun. One pyramid inch times 100 million equals the distance that the earth travels around the sun.

- 25 There are other assertions. Twice the length of the four sides of the pyramids is said to equal one minute of degree at the equator. The weight of the pyramid . . . times one billion yields the estimated weight of the earth.

What does all this mean? Why was the Great Pyramid at Giza built, and who built it? There are several popular theories answering these questions.

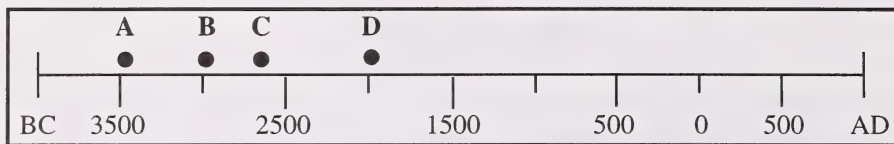
- 30 Some believe the Great Pyramid was built as a tomb to immortalize the pharaohs or as a marker to memorialize a particular reign. Perhaps it was planned as a time capsule capable of reviewing the past and foretelling the future. There is some evidence that the pyramids in general were designed to be used as surveying instruments or as scientific observatories to track and calculate certain natural cycles.

- 35 Years of study, although producing immense volumes of information, have left us far from certain or satisfied as to the origins or intended purposes of the pyramids. Our theories are rife with doubt; our conclusions are open to other interpretations.

Perhaps some day we’ll learn the secrets of the pyramids. But for now these answers are locked within the great walls, a monument to the genius of ancient peoples.

Cathy Sans

1. Which letter on the time-line indicates approximately when the Great Pyramid at Giza was built?



2. The meaning of the phrase “enormous feat” (line 10) is
- A. extensive planning
 - B. great achievement
 - C. large adventure
 - D. big expenditure
3. The pyramids were **most likely**
- A. homes for kings
 - B. temples to many gods
 - C. tombs for rulers
 - D. monuments to queens
4. “Our theories are rife with doubt” (line 36) suggests that
- A. no one believes the explanation
 - B. scientists believe their hypotheses are incorrect
 - C. mathematicians question the answers
 - D. no definitive conclusions have been made
5. Several references were made to “Giza” in this article. “Giza” is an Egyptian
- A. city
 - B. pharaoh
 - C. pyramidologist
 - D. measure

II. Read the excerpt from “The Inspector General” and answer questions 6 to 13.

from **THE INSPECTOR GENERAL**, Act 2

SCENE: *A room in a provincial hotel in Russia; early nineteenth century.*

SERVANT: The manager sent me to see what you want.

KHLESTAKOV: Ah, good to see you, old man. How are things going?

SERVANT: All right, thank you.

KHLESTAKOV: Is business booming here at the hotel?

5 SERVANT: Yes, sir. Thank you, sir.

KHLESTAKOV: Lots of guests?

SERVANT: Adequate, sir.

KHLESTAKOV: Well fine! You know, it’s almost past dinner time and I
haven’t eaten yet. Do a good turn and bring me a tray immediately, or I shall
10 be late for my appointment.

SERVANT: Sorry, sir, but the manager will charge no more dinners to you. In
fact, today he almost sent a complaint about you to the police.

KHLESTAKOV: A complaint? That’s ridiculous. After all, I’ve got to eat or I
shall starve. The truth of the matter is, I’m quite famished!

15 SERVANT: Be that as it may. He said he wasn’t going to give you anything else
until you had cleared up your bill.

KHLESTAKOV: Well, can’t you talk to him? Put in a good word for me!

SERVANT: But what can I say?

KHLESTAKOV: Talk to him seriously and tell him I’ve got to have something to
20 eat. The money—well—tell him just because his kind can go all day without
food, doesn’t mean that other people can. Preposterous idea!

SERVANT: Yes, sir, I’ll tell him. (*Exit SERVANT*)

KHLESTAKOV: How disgusting if he refuses to send up dinner. I’ve never been
so hungry. I wonder if I could pawn my clothes? My trousers? No, I’d rather
25 not eat than go home without my Petersburg suit. Too bad that Yokhim
wouldn’t let me rent a carriage. It would have been great to drive up in style
to a landlord’s house with my carriage lanterns on and Osip behind in uniform.
How impressed they would be. “Who is it? Who has come?” Then my
footman would announce (*he imitates footman*), “Ivan Alexandrovich
30 Khlestakov of Petersburg. Will you receive him?” Those country dunces,
though, wouldn’t even know what that meant. If any farmer visits them, he
stumbles right into the living room like a bear. Hmmm. I’d go up to a pretty
young girl and say, “Mademoiselle, I am so happy—” Huh! (*He spits*) I’m so
hungry I feel nauseated. (*Enter SERVANT*)

35 KHLESTAKOV: Yes, what do you want?

SERVANT: I’m bringing dinner.

KHLESTAKOV (*Claps his hands and jumps into his chair*): Ah, dinner. At last,
dinner.

Continued

SERVANT: The manager says this is the last dinner he will send you.

40 KHLESTAKOV: Oh, the manager. Who cares about the manager? What's there to eat?

SERVANT: Soup and roast beef.

KHLESTAKOV: You mean that is all?

SERVANT: That's all, sir.

45 KHLESTAKOV: Nonsense. I won't hear of it. That's not enough.

SERVANT: On the contrary, sir, the manager says it's far too much!

KHLESTAKOV: But what about the gravy?

SERVANT: There isn't any.

KHLESTAKOV: Why not? When I passed the kitchen I saw them making a lot,

50 and earlier in the dining room, I saw two short looking men eating salmon and other good things.

SERVANT: Well, there is some and then there isn't.

KHLESTAKOV: What do you mean?

SERVANT: I mean, there isn't any, sir.

55 KHLESTAKOV: No salmon? No gravy? No chops?

SERVANT: No, sir. Well, yes, sir. But only for those who pay, sir.

KHLESTAKOV: Oh, you, knucklehead. Why should I go hungry while they eat? Aren't I as good as they?

SERVANT: No, sir. Well, yes, sir, but the difference is, they have money.

60 KHLESTAKOV: Oh, it's a waste of time to argue with you. (*Tastes soup*) What awful soup. Why, it's only hot water you've poured into the bowl. There's no taste at all, only a dreadful smell. I'll not eat it! You must bring me some other.

SERVANT: Sorry, sir. The manager said if you didn't like this, you could go

65 without.

KHLESTAKOV (*Holding his bowl and plate*): Well, then leave it. Only, don't talk like that to me. I'll not have it. (*Tastes soup again*) Heavens, what soup. (*Continues to eat it*) I'm probably the first to ever eat soup like this. Why, there's even a feather floating on top. (*Spoons a piece of chicken in the soup*)

70 Ah, even the fowl is foul. Pass me the roast beef. Here, Osip, there's some soup left for you. (*Cuts meat*) You call this roast beef? It most certainly is not!

SERVANT: Then what is it?

KHLESTAKOV: Only the devil knows, but it is not beef. It tastes more like leather. Cheaters! What they won't give a person. Why, my jaw aches from

75 chewing just one bite. (*Picks teeth with finger*) It's even worse than tree bark. I can't get it out. Such food is enough to ruin one's teeth. (*Wipes mouth with napkin*) Isn't there anything else?

SERVANT: No, sir.

KHLESTAKOV: What cheaters they are. Not even dessert. It's terrible the way

80 they always take advantage of travelers.

Nikolai Gogol
adapted by Fran Tanner

6. In this play, the “SCENE”
- A. outlines what will happen
 - B. introduces the characters
 - C. tells where the action takes place
 - D. tells what will happen first
7. In lines 19 to 21, the dramatist **most likely** wishes to draw the reader’s attention to Khlestakov’s
- A. arrogance
 - B. humbleness
 - C. state of hunger
 - D. willingness to pay
8. The word **closest** in meaning to “preposterous” (line 21) is
- A. absurd
 - B. foolish
 - C. fantastic
 - D. inappropriate
9. In lines 23 to 34, Khlestakov is ridiculing the
- A. rural nobles
 - B. footman
 - C. urban merchants
 - D. servant
10. In lines 60 to 77, the dramatist is poking fun at Khlestakov’s image of himself as
- A. a critic of employees
 - B. an expert on etiquette
 - C. a witty conversationalist
 - D. an authority of fine food
11. The statement that **most clearly** reveals Khlestakov’s avoidance of the reality of his situation is
- A. “I’ve got to eat or I shall starve” (lines 13–14)
 - B. “Those country dunces” (line 30)
 - C. “Who cares about the manager?” (line 40)
 - D. “It’s terrible the way they always take advantage of travelers” (lines 79–80)

12. The last sentence of the passage **best** illustrates Khlestakov's

- A. self-deception
- B. indifference
- C. frustration
- D. bitterness

13. In this passage, Khlestakov can be described as

- A. snobbish and judgemental
- B. sensitive but aggressive
- C. outspoken and flattering
- D. unreasonable but responsible

III. Read the poem “River Skater” and answer questions 14 to 17.

RIVER SKATER

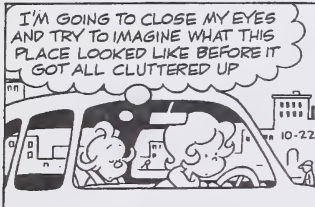
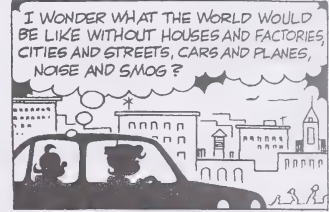
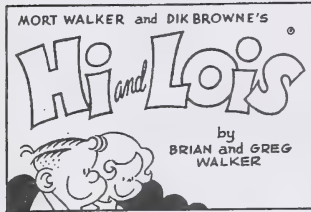
Bound to a boy's swift feet, hard blades of steel
Ring out a brutal rhythm from black ice.
A gawky skater with a godlike heel,
He cuts a clear and convolute device,
5 A foliated script, nor looks around
To see what letters twine where he has come,
But all delighted with the savage sound,
His body beats from such a solid drum,
He springs into a faster pace, and then,
10 Far down the pastures, paper-white and pure,
You see his figure slanted like a pen,
Writing his own and winter's signature.

Winifred Welles

14. The phrases “hard blades,” “brutal rhythm,” and “savage sound”
- A. describe the aggressive style of the skater
 - B. portray a bitterly cold winter scene
 - C. build an atmosphere of suspense
 - D. generate a feeling of speed
15. The word “twine” as used in line 6 means
- A. double
 - B. string
 - C. glisten
 - D. mark
16. The phrase “his figure slanted like a pen” (line 11) is an example of
- A. personification
 - B. metaphor
 - C. simile
 - D. hyperbole
17. Which of the following lines **best** shows a contrast of ideas?
- A. “Ring out a brutal rhythm from black ice” (line 2)
 - B. “A gawky skater with a godlike heel” (line 3)
 - C. “He springs into a faster pace, and then” (line 9)
 - D. “Far down the pastures, paper-white and pure” (line 10)

IV. Examine the cartoons and answer questions 18 to 20.

Cartoon A



Cartoon B

For Better or For Worse®

by Lynn Johnston



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18. The message of the final frame of Cartoon A is accomplished through the use of
- A. simile
 - B. irony
 - C. metaphor
 - D. personification
19. The message of the final frame of Cartoon B is accomplished through the use of
- A. simile
 - B. irony
 - C. metaphor
 - D. personification
20. These cartoons would **most likely** support the opinions of
- A. consumers
 - B. city planners
 - C. political analysts
 - D. environmentalists

Key and Descriptors for Practice Reading Questions

Item	Key	Language Function	Reporting Category	Curriculum Standard
1	B	Informational	Synthesizing Ideas	Draw a conclusion by synthesizing information
2	B	Informational	Associating Meaning	Infer the meaning of a phrase from its context
3	C	Informational	Synthesizing Ideas	Draw a conclusion by synthesizing information
4	D	Informational	Synthesizing Ideas	Draw a conclusion by synthesizing information
5	A	Informational	Main Ideas/Details	Locate key details
6	C	Narrative/ Poetic	Organization of Ideas	Understand the purpose of scene in a play
7	A	Narrative/ Poetic	Synthesizing ideas	Draw a conclusion about characters by synthesizing information
8	A	Narrative/ Poetic	Associating Meaning	Recognize the meaning of a word from its context
9	A	Narrative/ Poetic	Synthesizing Ideas	Draw a conclusion using prior knowledge and by synthesizing information
10	D	Narrative/ Poetic	Organization of Ideas	Understand the attitude conveyed by a dramatist concerning characters in a play
11	D	Narrative/ Poetic	Main Ideas/Details	Infer key character details in a play
12	A	Narrative/ Poetic	Main Ideas/Details	Infer key character details in a play
13	A	Narrative/ Poetic	Synthesizing Ideas	Draw a conclusion by synthesizing information in a play
14	A	Narrative/ Poetic	Associating Meaning	Understand a poet's choice of words to achieve a desired effect
15	D	Narrative/ Poetic	Associating Meaning	Understand the connotation of a word beyond its literal meaning
16	C	Narrative/ Poetic	Associating Meaning	Recognize examples of figurative language in a poem
17	B	Narrative/ Poetic	Organization of ideas	Recognize the poet's use of contrasting ideas in a poem
18	A	Narrative/ Poetic	Organization of ideas	Use pictures in conjunction with print to make meaning from a cartoon
19	B	Narrative/ Poetic	Organization of ideas	Use pictures in conjunction with print to make meaning from a cartoon
20	D	Narrative/ Poetic	Synthesizing Ideas	Draw a conclusion by synthesizing information in a cartoon

Preparing Students for the Test

The best way to prepare students for the achievement tests is to teach the curriculum well and to ensure that children know what is expected. Many of the skills and attitudes that support test writing are in fact good skills and strategies for approaching all kinds of learning tasks.

Have students do the practice questions included in this bulletin. Then, have students share strategies they used to answer the questions.

Also, familiarize students with the scoring guides in this bulletin. With instruction, students may be able to use these guides effectively when evaluating their own writing or that of peers.

In 1991 and 1995, the Student Evaluation Branch published documents entitled *Samples of Students' Writing*. These samples came from the student responses given on the 1990 and 1994 Language Arts Achievement Tests. Share these samples and the accompanying commentaries with students.

Teachers are also encouraged to share the following information with their students to help them prepare for the Grade 9 English Language Arts Achievement Test.

Part A: Writing

Have students:

Plan their available time carefully. We suggest that they use all the time available to them to carefully *read* the assignment and *think* about what they are being asked to do, to *plan* their writing so that it is focused, unified, and coherent, and to *proofread* their writing. They will have two hours to complete the assignments.

Read all the instructions carefully and do what the assignments ask them to do. The time they spend in reading and thinking about the assignments is time well spent. Many students find that highlighting or underlining key words in the assignments helps them to focus on what is expected.

Plan their writing using the pages provided. They should choose a planning strategy that helps them to focus their ideas. They may want to try

- webbing
- using a chart
- listing (main ideas, character, etc.)
- using a plot outline (diagram)
- using a RAFTS model (role, audience, focus, topic, strong verb)

Use their reference materials. They are allowed the use of a dictionary and a thesaurus when writing Part A. Students should use a dictionary to look up the meanings of words that they want to use but are not completely sure about and to ensure that they spell words correctly. A thesaurus can be useful if they need to find a more precise word for the context they are developing, but students should be careful not to overuse a thesaurus.

Keep in mind the characteristics of effective writing.

- Awareness of audience (appropriateness of tone and use of correct language)
- Completeness of information (enough detail to fulfill purpose)
- Relevance of information (all details pertain to the purpose)
- Clarity of information (all details are specific and easily understood by the reader)

Proofread their work and correct errors directly on their first draft. Students should double-space, if they think it will allow them to make corrections more easily.

Part B: Reading

Have students:

Read the material using the strategy that works best for them. They should either

- read the selection and think carefully about it before they try any of the multiple-choice questions associated with the reading selection OR
- read the questions first and then read the selection, keeping in mind the questions they will need to answer

Each set of multiple-choice questions is designed to take them back through the reading selection in a certain way. The questions are ordered according to the location of the answers in the passage. For example, the answer to the first question will likely appear near the beginning of the passage, and so on. Questions relating to the reading selection as a whole will appear at the end of the set of questions.

Consider all forms of information provided.

Information will be presented not only in words but also in visual forms such as cartoons, pictures, or charts.

Take the time to reread the lines that are referred to in a question. Many questions contain quotations from the selection with line references indicated. It is always

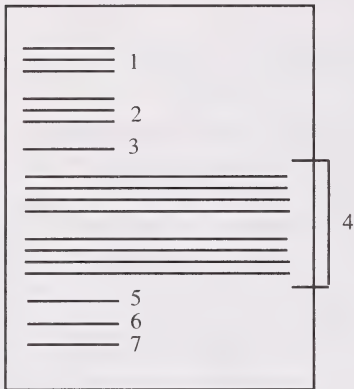
worthwhile to reread the lines that are referenced and consider the meanings of these lines in both their immediate context in the selection and the context of the selection as a whole.

Read carefully all four alternatives (A, B, C, and D) before choosing the answer that they think is best. Some of the questions are designed to test their ability to make a judgement. These questions will often include a bold-faced qualifier such as **best**, **most strongly**, or **most clearly** in their stems. All of the alternatives (A, B, C, and D) are, to some degree, correct, but one of the alternatives will be “best” in that it takes more of the reading selection into account or can be supported most strongly by reference to the reading selection.

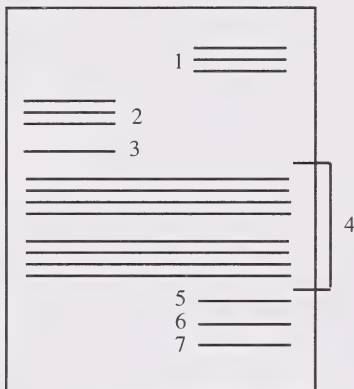
Work from partial knowledge when it is appropriate to do so. If a correct or best answer does not become obvious fairly quickly, students may want to eliminate the answers that seem least appropriate and then use their judgement to select an answer from those that remain.

For further suggestions, see *Teaching Students with Learning Disabilities*, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch pages LD122 to 124.

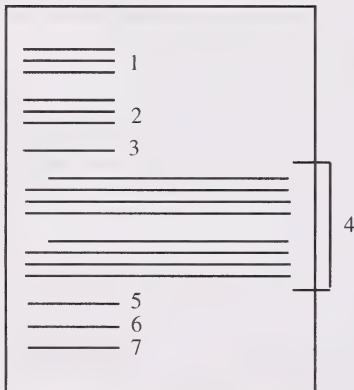
Three Business Letter Formats



The block format. In this format, all parts of the letter run along the left side of the page (margin). No paragraphs in the body are indented.



The modified block format. In this format, the heading and the closing and signature run along the right margin. All the other parts run along the left margin.



The semiblock format. This format is the same as the block format, except that the paragraphs in the body are indented.

Format of a Business Letter

There are three basic business letter formats. Any of these formats is appropriate and acceptable for the test. What is most important is that students choose one format and use it consistently, so that the overall appearance of the letter is attractive. Note: Students are asked to double-space their work, so that it is easier to make changes. This should only be applied to the body of the letter and not to the other parts.

Parts of the Business Letter (see previous page)

1. Heading

The heading consists of your address and the date.

501 Spring Street
Regina SK R3T 4N7
January 3, 1997

2. Inside Address

The inside address consists of the name and address of the person to whom you are writing. It usually appears four lines below the heading if a word processor is used, or one line below if it is hand-written.

Sam Hunt, Director
The Knitting Mill
1409 3 Avenue
Toronto ON L3V 7O1

3. Salutation

The most traditional salutation or greeting for a business letter is *Dear* followed by Mr., Ms., Mrs., or Miss and the person’s last name, and ending with a colon.

Dear Mr. Smith:
Dear Ms. Black:
Dear Mrs. Brown:
Dear Miss Green:

4. Body

The body is the main part of the letter in which you write what you have to say to the person. Skip one line after the salutation.

- Be concise. Ensure that sufficient information is given so that your purpose is clearly understood, and your request well received.
- Business letters are usually formal, so the language that you use should also be formal.

5. Closing

The closing is the ending to your letter. It appears at the bottom of the letter, directly under the body. Only the first word in the closing should be capitalized. It is always followed by a comma.

Yours truly,
Sincerely,

6. Signature

The signature is your full name signed. Your signature should appear directly below the closing. It should always be written in ink.

7. Your name printed

8. Commonly Used Abbreviations for Provinces and Territories

Province	Symbol
Alberta	AB
British Columbia	BC
Manitoba	MB
New Brunswick	NB
Newfoundland	NF
Northwest Territories	NT
Nova Scotia	NS
Ontario	ON
Prince Edward Island	PE
Quebec	QC or PQ
Saskatchewan	SK
Yukon	YT

Addressing an Envelope

The diagram shows a rectangular envelope with a horizontal flap at the top. In the top left corner, there are three horizontal lines representing the return address, with a circled number 1 next to them. In the center of the envelope, there are four horizontal lines representing the mailing address, with a circled number 2 to their left.

1. Return Address

The return address is the name and address of the person sending the letter. The return address appears in the top left corner of the envelope and consists of your name, street address, city or town, province, and postal code.

JEAN BROWN
13 SPRING RD
TORONTO ON L2R 3V6

2. Mailing Address

The mailing address is the name and address to which the letter is being sent. It always appears in the centre of the envelope. In a business letter, the address on the envelope is the same as the inside address of the letter. There may be separate lines for the title of the addressee (Editor, Director, President), the division or department the person works in, and the name of his or her company, business, or organization.

SAM HUNT
DIRECTOR
THE KNITTING MILL
1403 3 AVE
TORONTO ON L3V 7O1

The following points are taken from the *Canadian Addressing Standards* document:

1. Addresses should be typed or written in upper case or block letters.
2. All lines of the address must be formatted with a uniform left margin.
3. Punctuation marks (commas, periods, etc.) should not be used unless they are part of a place name (e.g., ST. JOHN'S).
4. The postal code should always appear on the same line as the municipality and province name and should be separated from the province by two spaces.
5. The two-letter symbol for the province name should be used wherever possible (see previous page).
6. The return address should be formatted in the same way as the main address.

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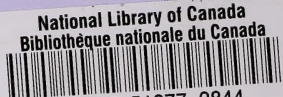
Questions or comments regarding this bulletin should be directed to:

David Harvey
Language Arts Assessment Specialist
Achievement Testing Program
Student Evaluation Branch
Alberta Education
Box 43
11160 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton AB T5K 0L2

Telephone: 403-427-0010
FAX: 403-422-4200
E-mail address: dharvey@edc.gov.ab.ca

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